



Higher Education for Development Drylands Management Program

What is the Higher Education for Development Drylands Management Program?

The Higher Education for Development Drylands Management Program is a USAID-funded partnership between the University of Nairobi and Colorado State University designed to ensure the sustainability and productivity of Kenya's dryland ecosystems and promote the development of its pastoral communities through increased rates of higher education. The Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies (CSDDES) graduate degree program in Sustainable Drylands Resource Management opened to students in academic year 2011-2012.



Photo: USAID/CSDDES

University of Nairobi student on field trip to Mpala Research Centre

Project Duration and Budget

March 2011 – June 2013

\$1.4 million

Who implements the Higher Education for Development Drylands Management Program?

Higher Education for Development

University of Nairobi, Colorado State University

<http://csdes.uonbi.ac.ke/>

Where does Higher Education Development for Drylands Management Program work?

Turkana, Greater Karamoja Ecosystem; Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit counties, Greater Ewaso Nyiro Ecosystems; South Rift, Greater Maasai Ecosystems; Kitui, Mwingi, Makueni agro-ecosystems.

What does the Higher Education for Development Drylands Management Program do?

The UoN – CSU partnership expands a regional Ph.D. program at the Department of Land Resources Management and Agricultural Technology (LARMAT) with new courses that address the development and environmental challenges of dryland ecosystems and communities. Students are recruited from traditionally disadvantaged populations, including pastoralists and women. Activities include:

Human capacity development

- The Drylands Leadership Learning Program builds the capacity of students and faculty to work with dryland communities, civil society, the private sector, and the Government of Kenya to address the problems of Drylands ecosystems and societies.
- The Research-for-Development Fellowship Program provides grants to students to research development and sustainability issues in Drylands communities.
- The Drylands Community Outreach Program promotes interest in higher education among pastoral people, especially women and girls.
- A Drylands Knowledge Exchange Platform coordinates knowledge exchange and access to information on Kenya's drylands ecosystems.

Institutional capacity development

- CSDDES Advisory Board, comprised of sector experts, pastoralists, and women, conducts needs assessments in drylands communities.
- Community Voices Workshops ensure that the real problems of pastoral people are addressed by CSDDES.
- Partnerships formed with Government of Kenya ministries and key Drylands institutions leverage support for higher education for Drylands students.

How is the Higher Education Development Drylands Management Program making a difference?

- 13 students selected for CSDDES graduate program in Sustainable Drylands.
- Three female students from Drylands pastoral areas selected to pursue MSc studies.
- In partnership with Mpala Research Centre in Kenya, six undergraduates and two MSc students from pastoral areas receive support through CSDDES.

What key challenges does the Higher Education Development Drylands Management Program face?

The demand for higher education in the Drylands of Kenya is greater than CSDDES can support at this time. The Drylands are vast and illiteracy is high among pastoral people. Climate variability increasingly forces pastoralists to be on the move in search of water and pastures, making it difficult to reach pastoral communities and share timely information. Unemployment and insecurity is high and public and private investment in infrastructure in Drylands areas is inadequate.

The Higher Education Development Drylands Management Program in action

Drylands communities are often marginalized and impoverished. No one knows better the challenges of sustaining a life and livelihood in a Drylands ecosystem than the pastoralists who live there. But most pastoralists lack access to higher education to acquire the skills to improve the lives and livelihoods of their communities. High illiteracy and poor early childhood education leave many pastoral people ill equipped for higher education. Add to that the vagaries of climate change that force pastoralists to uproot in search of water and pasture land, and traditional education is out of reach for most.

The Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies reaches out to Drylands communities to promote the goal of higher education among secondary school students, among them the future leaders of their communities. Ph.D. students working in Drylands management mentor promising community youth members, bringing them on as community-based interns on field research activities in the hope that these promising youth will go on to study Drylands management and return to their communities to create business opportunities and support sustainable development.

For more information

<http://csdes.uonbi.ac.ke/>

Dr. Jesse Njoka, Coordinator/Director
Center for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies
University of Nairobi
Tel: +254 0 202 133 086
Email: jtnjoka@gmail.com
sustainabledrylands@gmail.com

Dr. Robin Reid, Coordinator/Director
Center for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies
Colorado State University
Tel: +001 970 491 5941
Email: robin.reid@colostate.edu

Isaac Thendiu, AOR
USAID/Kenya
Agriculture, Business and Environment Office
Tel: +254 208 622 255
Email: ithendiu@usaid.gov

Photo: USAID/CSDDES



Students from University of Nairobi, Princeton University, and University of Illinois studying dryland ecosystems at Mpala Research Centre

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